

CHOOSING A MONARCH BY THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

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(The Minister of Sport and Culture is being interviewed.)

INTERVIEWER

Good evening, Minister. It has been leaked in the newspapers that you are about to introduce legislation to abolish the monarchy. Is this true?

MINISTER

Goodness me no! I am an ardent monarchist.

No I want to strengthen the monarchy by going back to its ancient roots. We used to have a king or queen selected by God. In early societies, the king or queen was chosen by lot from all the citizens on Midsummer Day. We will, however, be dispensing with the old

Monarchy

practice of sacrificing the previous King or Queen before the coronation.

As Minister of Sport and Culture I am involved, because we want to be bang up to date, and do it with the National Lottery. The religious leaders will of course be present at the draw.

INTERVIEWER

But isn't this a terrible step backwards. Shouldn't we be moving to a twenty-first century system?

MINISTER

Oh! But we are. We are moving to be in conformity with the Human Rights Act. Under the new system, there is no discrimination by gender, class, sect, religion, or legitimacy. Of course there never has been any discrimination by sexual preference, intellect, or sanity.

INTERVIEWER

Well I know the ancient people had systems something like this, but why are we abolishing the wonderful British system of primogeniture which has given us so many years of peace and prosperity.

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MINISTER

In fact the system of primogeniture is an alien introduction from Europe. Only with the Plantagenets (Frenchmen [sniff]) did it come in as a theoretical rule, 850 years ago. For the next 650 years it remained one of these European Laws that everybody talked about but nobody obeyed. The law was obeyed for two generations, occasionally three, then the first-born was murdered, executed or deposed by civil war or coup. Effectively, succession was not to the first-born but to the most cunning, ruthless and bloodthirsty.

No, primogeniture only really started to work 200 years ago when parliament appointed George I, and it lasted only seven generations until 1936 when a king was forced to abdicate for political reasons.

INTERVIEWER

But Minister, surely that is the most stable period in our history?

MINISTER

But that is precisely when the monarchy stopped being effective. Instead of rule by the most cunning, ruthless and bloodthirsty, we had rule by the inbred.

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Choosing our kings and queens by lot will strengthen the system. Any British citizen who voted in the last election, and is aged between 21 and 70 will be eligible, provided of course that they have no criminal convictions, they are not bankrupt and they have not been certified insane.

Statistically, we can expect to get a monarch rather better than the average citizen - which is clearly not the situation today.

INTERVIEWER

But Minister, we could end up with a king or queen whose family is clearly not British!

MINISTER

Put it the other way: for the first time there is a possibility of having someone with a name that is clearly English, Smith, say. Today we now have the Battenbergs (they have changed their name to Windsor, but we know). Before them the Saxe-Coburg Gothas, then the Hanovers, then some other German then a Dutchman. That's right, about three or four hundred years ago there were some Scots, the Stuarts, and before them the Welsh Tudors, then we go back to the French, the Danes and the Angles. All foreigners.

Monarchy

INTERVIEWER

But Minister we could get some asylum seekers,
some Eastern European.

MINISTER

Someone half Greek half Russian like Prince
Philip. Yes I do see the problem.

INTERVIEWER

Minister! We could get someone who is stark
raving mad, but who nobody has yet got round to
certifying.

MINISTER

Who are you thinking of? George III, Henry
VIII, Richard III, James I?

INTERVIEWER

They could be half witted!

MINISTER

As for low in intelligence, what is the
statistical probability of getting someone less
intelligent than some of our past royals?

INTERVIEWER

*(Looks at him thinks, starts to speak, then
starts again)*

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But we could get a traitor!

MINISTER

Like our own dear Queen's uncle, Edward VIII?
Or many of her ancestors. How many kings were
killed or deposed because someone else thought
that they were traitors? How many got away
with it, and killed the people who were trying
to stop their treachery? That is what English
history is all about. That is what Shakespeare
is all about.

INTERVIEWER

We could get a mass murderer!

MINISTER

Well yes. It would liven things up. But these
days it is not absolutely essential to be a
mass murderer to be a successful monarch.

INTERVIEWER

But Minister, the person chosen could have a
scandalous private life and bring the
institution of the monarch into disrepute. He
could be living openly with his mistress, while
his wife has a string of well-publicised
affairs.

Monarchy

(The Minister looks at him)

Well anyway the king or queen may not be Church of England

MINISTER

Almost nobody is. But because we will be having a new monarch every year, the chances are that every sect will get its chance, C of E, The Salvation Army, the Methodists. No doubt there will be a Muslim sometime. But each will be on their best behaviour, trying to show that they are better than the others.

The big advantage of this system over the previous one is that we will get rid of any king or queen before they have been there long enough to do any damage.

INTERVIEWER

Minister, we all know that coronations are very expensive. You are proposing that the country has an expensive coronation every year.

MINISTER

I was hoping that you would ask me that. In fact, we have just signed a contract with the people who did Big Brother. We are going to make an absolute bomb.

ENDS

Monarchy